



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting March 17, 2007**

DATE: March 8, 2007

SUBJECT: Request to Advertise Public Hearings on Amendments to Section 25B. "C-O Rosslyn" Commercial Office Building, Retail, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts, to allow additional height up to a maximum of four hundred seventy (470) feet above sea level for properties within the boundaries of Central Place, defined as the blocks bounded by 19th Street North, North Lynn Street, Wilson Boulevard, and Fort Myer Drive, by the Planning Commission on April 9, 2007, and the County Board on April 21, 2007 (See Attachment 1).

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize advertisement of public hearings on amending, reenacting, and recodifying Section 25B. "C-O Rosslyn" Commercial Office Building, Retail, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts, to allow additional height up to a maximum of four hundred seventy (470) feet above sea level for properties within the boundaries of Central Place, by the Planning Commission on April 9, 2007, and the County Board on April 21, 2007 (See Attachment 1).

ISSUES: In order to facilitate the urban design objectives for Central Place in Rosslyn, should the Zoning Ordinance be amended to increase permitted maximum building heights for both blocks in Central Place?

SUMMARY: In conjunction with the Central Place Site Plan proposal, rezoning application, and proposed General Land Use Plan and Master Transportation Plan amendments, in November 2006 the County Board authorized advertisement of a Zoning Ordinance amendment to "C-O Rosslyn" that would increase the maximum permitted height to 500 feet above sea level within the two Central Place blocks, contingent upon specific development and urban design guidelines within the "C-O Rosslyn" Zoning District. Subsequent to this advertisement, the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment language underwent public review. During this review process, specific concerns regarding the clarity and intent of the amendment language were raised. To address these concerns, staff is proposing that an alternative amendment be advertised that would increase the maximum permitted height to 470 feet above sea level within the two Central Place Blocks, when a project is found to be generally consistent with a proposed Resolution on Urban Design Principles for Rosslyn Central Place (See Attachment 2). Once advertised, this proposed

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Anthony Fusarelli, Jr., DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-4652

language will provide an alternative to the proposed amendment to “C-O Rosslyn” advertised in November 2006. Both options may then be considered by the County Board at their April 21, 2007, public hearing. Therefore, it is recommended that the County Board authorize advertisement of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment.

BACKGROUND: At its November 15, 2006, carry-over meeting, the County Board approved the advertisement of a proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment to “C-O Rosslyn” Commercial Office Building, Hotel, and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts, that would allow additional height up to a maximum of five hundred (500) feet above sea level for properties within the two Central Place blocks, contingent upon the proposal meeting specific development and urban design guidelines. The amendment to permit additional height within Central Place was intended to create a focal point (per the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum) and achieve a more dynamic Rosslyn skyline as desired by the County Board. To prevent direct adverse impacts, the proposed amendment required any additional height to be considered only when a development proposal meets specific form and design requirements. By including both blocks and identifying maximum heights up to 500 feet above sea level, the advertised language was designed to give the County Board flexibility in their final action.

DISCUSSION: During the public review process that followed the November 2006 advertisement of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment, the Planning and Transportation Commissions identified areas of concern with the proposed language. Also, at their February 26, 2007, public hearing, the County Board asked staff to revisit the proposed ordinance language and consider ways to address these concerns. In summary, many of the comments requested greater clarity in the ordinance language as to the relationship between the community benefits applicable to attaining the “C-O Rosslyn” portion of the project and those benefits associated with additional building height over 300 feet. Other comments requested clarifying language to distinguish whether certain design parameters outlined in the ordinance would apply only within Central Place or throughout the “Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District” (See Attachment 4). Further clarification to specify which parameters are requirements as opposed to goals was also requested.

To address these concerns, staff is proposing an alternative approach for a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to the “C-O Rosslyn” District. The proposed amendment clarifies that an enhanced Rosslyn skyline is the principal County objective to be achieved by permitting height greater than 300 feet within Central Place.

The proposed amendment would permit additional building height within both blocks of Central Place up to a maximum of 470 feet above sea level. While the language advertised in November 2006 proposed a maximum of 500 feet above sea level to give the County Board greater flexibility, comments received during public review reaffirmed the original Rosslyn Working Group recommendation for maximum heights up to 470 feet above sea level.

As opposed to the usual measurement above average site elevation, staff’s proposal to consider maximum building heights in Central Place in terms of elevation above sea level provides greater predictability with regard to the potential absolute maximum building height. This is of particular relevance given the existing varied topography within Central Place. In this instance,

an approach that considers maximum building height above sea level is also more consistent with the Federal Aviation Administration's approach of measuring an object's height above sea level when determining potential hazards to air navigation. Within Central Place, a maximum building height up to 470 feet above sea level could theoretically permit building heights that fall within the range of 366 and 398 feet above grade (given existing site elevations between 72 and 104 feet above sea level). However, the maximum building heights above grade would vary on a case-by-case basis according to the calculated average site elevation for specific development proposals.

Staff is proposing to remove the urban design guidelines in the previously advertised zoning ordinance language from the ordinance itself and insert new modified guidelines into a separate County Board Resolution on Urban Design Principles for Central Place (see Attachment 2). This approach further clarifies that these principles are general guidelines for the County Board to use in evaluating Central Place projects and for additional height. This should avoid confusion as to future interpretation.

The proposed Resolution on Urban Design Principles for Rosslyn Central Place includes criteria that pertain to all site plan projects within Central Place. Additional separate criteria are proposed for projects seeking approval for building height greater than 300 feet.

While the Planning Commission commented that several of the design and development criteria outlined for Central Place might be desired throughout Rosslyn, such determination prior to a comprehensive study of the Rosslyn station area may be premature, and potentially inconsistent with the recommendations of the Rosslyn Working Group. Therefore, at this time, staff recommends that these guidelines should apply only to projects within Central Place. This would not preclude applying similar guidelines to other areas within the Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District in the future.

One final concern raised in the review process of the advertised ordinance was the relationship between additional height and additional community benefit. Consistent with general County policy, community benefits are typically anticipated and evaluated in exchange for a proposal's requested additional density, not in terms of additional height. The proposed ordinance language is consistent with this policy, in that there is no additional density being proposed above 10 F.A.R. in "C-O Rosslyn". However, buildings would only be approved with additional height where they meet the guidelines in the attached proposed resolution.

CONCLUSION: Therefore, it is recommended that the County Board authorize advertisement of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments by the Planning Commission on April 9, 2007, and the County Board on April 21, 2007.

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE ADVERTISEMENT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS ON ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 25B. “C-O ROSSLYN” COMMERCIAL OFFICE BUILDING, RETAIL, HOTEL, AND MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLING DISTRICTS TO AMEND, REENACT AND RECODIFY ZONING PROVISIONS OF THE ARLINGTON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE, TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL HEIGHT UP TO A MAXIMUM OF FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY (470) FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL FOR PROPERTIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF CENTRAL PLACE.

The County Board of Arlington hereby resolves that the following amendments to Section 25B. “C-O Rosslyn” Commercial Office Building, Retail, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts of the Zoning Ordinance be advertised for public hearings by the Planning Commission on April 9, 2007, and the County Board on April 21, 2007, to amend, reenact, and recodify Zoning Ordinance provisions to allow additional height up to a maximum of four hundred seventy (470) feet above sea level for properties within the boundaries of Central Place in Rosslyn, which is defined as the blocks bounded by 19th Street North, North Lynn Street, Wilson Boulevard, and Fort Myer Drive, for reasons required by the public necessity, convenience and general welfare and good zoning practice (See Attachment 1).

ATTACHMENT 1

SECTION 25B. "C-O ROSSLYN" COMMERCIAL OFFICE BUILDING, RETAIL, HOTEL AND MULTIPLE-FAMILY DWELLING DISTRICTS

The purpose of the "C-O Rosslyn" District classification is to encourage a mixed-use development of office, retail and service commercial, hotel and multiple-family dwelling uses within the Rosslyn Metro Station Area and the area designated as the "Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District" on the General Land Use Plan. When a lot is located in the area designated "Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District" on the General Land Use Plan, site plans may be approved by the county board. Determination as to the actual types and densities of uses to be allowed will be based on the characteristics of the site and its location, and on the extent to which the proposed site plan for development, redevelopment or rehabilitation of the site meets the standards of this section and accomplishes the policies and recommendations contained in the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum and other plans and policies established for the area by the county board. The goals of this zoning classification are (1) to create premier office space suitable for regional and national headquarters of major corporations, institutions and international firms; (2) to provide hotels that expand and enhance hotel services for Rosslyn and Arlington County businesses, residents, and visitors; (3) to provide residential development that meets the housing goals and policies of Arlington County; (4) to implement urban design, streetscape and open space plans and policies, including the Central Place, the Esplanade and other public facilities; (5) to achieve the policy objectives for increasing retail commercial services in the center of Rosslyn; and (6) to achieve superior architecture and the best in urban design practice.

The following regulations shall apply in the "C-O Rosslyn" District:*

***Note**--For supplemental regulations, see Section 31.

A. Uses Permitted.

All uses as permitted and regulated in "C-1-O" Districts, and special exception site plans as previously approved by the county board, subject to all conditions of approval and any future amendments which the county board may approve. (Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

B. Site Plan Approval.

Site plans are required to be approved as provided in Section 36, subsection H. (Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

C. Special Exceptions.

Site plans may be approved by the county board as specified herein:

1. The following uses may be approved when allowed by the General Land Use Plan:
 - a. Office commercial uses.
 - b. Multiple-family dwellings.
 - c. Hotels.

- d. Retail and service commercial uses shall be provided and located as described in the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum. Primary retail and service commercial uses shall generally be located at the street level and on the streets identified for such uses in the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum. Secondary retail and service commercial uses shall generally be located on levels other than the street level and off the street frontages or in areas designated for secondary retail and service commercial uses in the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum.
2. Density.
 - a. The office, retail and service commercial gross floor area permitted on a given site shall be determined by multiplying the site area by 3.8. The hotel and multiple-family dwelling gross floor area permitted on a given site shall be determined by multiplying the site area by 4.8.
 - b. No portion of the site shall be used more than one (1) time in computing the permitted density. All penthouse area in excess of that used for elevator, mechanical, or maintenance equipment shall be counted as gross floor area.

(Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

D. Height Limit.

Thirty-five (35) feet, except that the following may be approved by site plan:

1. Office, retail and service commercial buildings: Up to a maximum height of one hundred fifty-three (153) feet, including penthouse and parapet walls, measured from the average elevation at the perimeter of the site.
2. Hotel and multiple-family dwelling buildings: Up to a maximum height of one hundred eighty (180) feet, including penthouse and parapet walls, measured from the average elevation at the perimeter of the site.

(Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

E. Provision for Additional Density and Height.

1. In considering the approval of a site plan, the County Board may permit additional density, above 3.8 floor area ratio (FAR) for office, retail and service commercial uses, above 4.8 FAR for hotels and multiple-family dwellings, and above the existing density on a site when it is already greater than 3.8 FAR for office, retail and service commercial uses, or above 4.8 FAR for hotels and multiple-family dwellings, up to maximum of 10.0 FAR and/or height up to a maximum of three hundred (300) feet. Increases in density and height may be approved when the County Board finds that the development proposal offers important community benefits identified in approved plans for the area and meets the other special exception criteria of the Zoning Ordinance. In considering such modification, the County Board may also consider characteristics of the site and the area as described in Section 36.H.5. of this ordinance and the plans and policies adopted for the area. Provisions of Section 36.H.7. for the approval of additional height and density shall not be applicable in the "C-O Rosslyn" district. In no case shall application of the modification of use provisions of Section 36.H.5. be applied to permit a density of more than 10.0 FAR or a height of more than three hundred (300) feet except as described below.

2. To enable the County to provide for adequate streets the County Board may grant additional density (FAR) within the height limit up to an amount that would be permitted if any area dedicated from the site for street purposes were permitted to be counted in calculating density.

3. To enable the County to achieve an enhanced Rosslyn skyline the County Board may grant additional height up to maximum of four hundred seventy (470) feet above sea level for projects within Central Place (defined as the area bounded by 19th Street N., North Lynn Street, Wilson Boulevard, and North Fort Myer Drive). Site plan projects within Central Place may be approved when the County Board finds a project is generally consistent with the April 21, 2007 County Board Resolution on Urban Design Principles for Rosslyn Central Place, and additionally meets the standards of Section 36.H.3. of this ordinance.

F. Parking Requirements.

Parking shall be regulated as specified and regulated in Section 33, and as specified below, except that the County Board may specify and modify parking regulations by Site Plan Approval:

1. Dwelling unit: One (1) off-street parking space shall be provided for each dwelling unit.
2. Transportation Demand Management plans shall be required to be approved as part of any site plan approval unless determined otherwise by the county board. Office, retail and service commercial parking may be approved within a range between the rate of one (1) off-street parking space for each five hundred thirty (530) square feet of office, retail and service commercial gross floor area and the rate of one (1) off-street parking space for each one thousand (1,000) square feet of office, retail and service commercial gross floor area depending on the adequacy of the Transportation Demand Management plan in addressing the need for parking. Short-term, convenient parking shall be provided for customers of commercial tenant retailers when the business premises are open to the public for business.
3. Hotel: Seven-tenths (0.7) off-street parking space for each guest room and dwelling unit.
4. The parking provided shall be located below grade or within the structure housing the use to which the parking is appurtenant, except as may be allowed in an approved site plan.
5. Off-street loading spaces for all permitted uses shall be provided as specified in Section 33.

(Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

G. Area Requirements.

Each lot shall have a minimum average width of one hundred twenty-five (125) feet and a minimum area of thirty thousand (30,000) square feet. The County Board may authorize application for rezoning to the "C-O Rosslyn" District where a lot or plot having less width or less area is part of a block surrounded by streets and/or buildings that generally comply with the provisions of this section.

(Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

H. Landscaping.

Twenty (20) percent of total site area is required to be landscaped open space in accordance with the requirements of Section 32A, "Landscaping". The County Board may modify landscaping requirements by site plan approval when the County Board finds that the proposed site plan accomplishes the policies and recommendations contained in the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum and other plans and policies established for the area by the County Board.
(Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

I. Streetscape.

Streetscapes, including curb, gutter, sidewalk, street light, street furniture, landscaping and other elements, shall be provided as contained in the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum, and other plans and policies established for the area by the County Board.
(Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

J. Additional Regulations.

1. For supplemental regulations, see Section 31.
2. Bulk, coverage and placement requirements are as regulated in Section 32, or as shown above, or as approved by the county board in a site plan approval.
3. Loading space must be provided as required in Section 33, or as approved by the county board in a site plan approval.
4. Signs are regulated by Section 34, or as approved by the county board in a site plan approval.

(Ord. No. 96-19, 5-11-96)

ATTACHMENT 2

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Resolution on Urban Design Principles for Rosslyn Central Place

Adopted by the County Board April __, 2007

WHEREAS the Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District (“RCRD”) was adopted by the County Board in 1996 and designated on the County's General Land Use Plan; and

WHEREAS sites within the “RCRD” have been rezoned to “C-O Rosslyn” and on such rezoned sites special exception site plans, with building heights up to 300 feet, may be approved by the County Board; and

WHEREAS the policies of the Arlington County General Land Use Plan and the Rosslyn Station Area Plan generally call for the greatest building heights to be focused closest to the Metro Station with building heights tapering down as locations are farther away from the station; and

WHEREAS the Rosslyn Station Area Plan calls for the creation of a Central Place that is the hub of pedestrian and retail activity in Rosslyn with a unique character to its architecture and streetscape design;

WHEREAS the Arlington County Board passed a 2002 Resolution Governing Building Heights in Rosslyn that established general principles for considering height and design of future site plans within the RCRD; and

WHEREAS the Rosslyn Working Group was established by the County Manager to further consider planning principles relating to building height, land use and urban design within Central Place (defined as the two blocks bounded by North Lynn Street, 19th Street N., Fort Myer Drive, and Wilson Boulevard) and to make specific recommendations based on a thorough analysis of these principles;

THEREFORE the Arlington County Board hereby resolves that the following major principles shall be used in considering future site plans within Central Place:

Building, site, and streetscape designs should create clearly recognizable mid-block pedestrian connections that enhance connectivity to the Rosslyn Metro Station;

Project design should maximize, to the extent possible, retail, restaurant, entertainment, and commercial uses within the first two floors of the building;

Despite existing variations in local topographic conditions, building bases across the Central Place blocks should possess heights at approximately equal elevations above sea level;

The number of curb cuts should be minimized, especially along North Moore Street, and parking entrances should be consolidated to maximize storefronts and retail continuity;

Building design should maximize active retail and other pedestrian-oriented uses by maximizing the extent of clear glazing and ground level façade transparency along public street frontages; and

IN ADDITION, the Arlington County Board further resolves that the following major principles shall be used in considering additional building height above 300 feet for future site plans within Central Place:

Buildings should include distinctive architectural features such as sculpted rooftop designs or significant tapering in its building form and massing;

Any additional building height should not adversely impact the panoramic view shed from any public observation deck (approved or built) within Central Place;

Projects should otherwise be consistent with the principles included in the September 2002 County Board Resolution Governing Building Heights in Rosslyn;

Buildings should receive confirmation from the Federal Aviation Administration (F.A.A.) that the project is not a hazard to air navigation or that the project does not require notice to or approval by the F.A.A.

ATTACHMENT 3

Resolution Governing Building Heights in Rosslyn

Adopted by the County Board September 17, 2002

WHEREAS the Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District ("RCRD") was created in 1996 and designated on the County's General Land Use Plan and sites within the "RCRD" have been rezoned to "C-O Rosslyn" and special exception site plans, with building heights up to 300 feet, may be approved by the County Board; and

WHEREAS the policies of the Arlington County General Land Use Plan and the Rosslyn Station Area Plan generally call for the greatest building heights to be focused closest to the Metro Station with building heights tapering down as locations are farther away from the station; and

WHEREAS the County Board believes that the skyline of the Rosslyn area, and areas outside the "RCRD" would benefit from the development of architecturally distinctive buildings, with the greatest heights focused around the Metro Station and tapering down in height toward the boundaries of the "RCRD"; and

WHEREAS the County Board finds that tapering of building heights as described in the previous paragraph will better provide for planning for improved use of land, will contribute to local economic development and to the furtherance of harmonious and attractive development in the County; and

WHEREAS the Board finds that the County's General Land Use Plan and supporting documents, the Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum, and the Zoning Ordinance set forth the foregoing land use policies, which policies the Board wishes to emphasize through a statement of general principles pertaining to development within the "RCRD",

THEREFORE the Arlington County Board hereby resolves that the following principles shall be used in considering the height and design of future site plans within the "RCRD" and directs the County Manager to consider these principles in the future planning of the Rosslyn Station area Plan update, and in future revisions to the "C-O Rosslyn" Zoning District:

New buildings in the "RCRD" shall be architecturally distinctive with particular attention given to the design of the tops of the buildings and their impact on the Rosslyn Skyline;

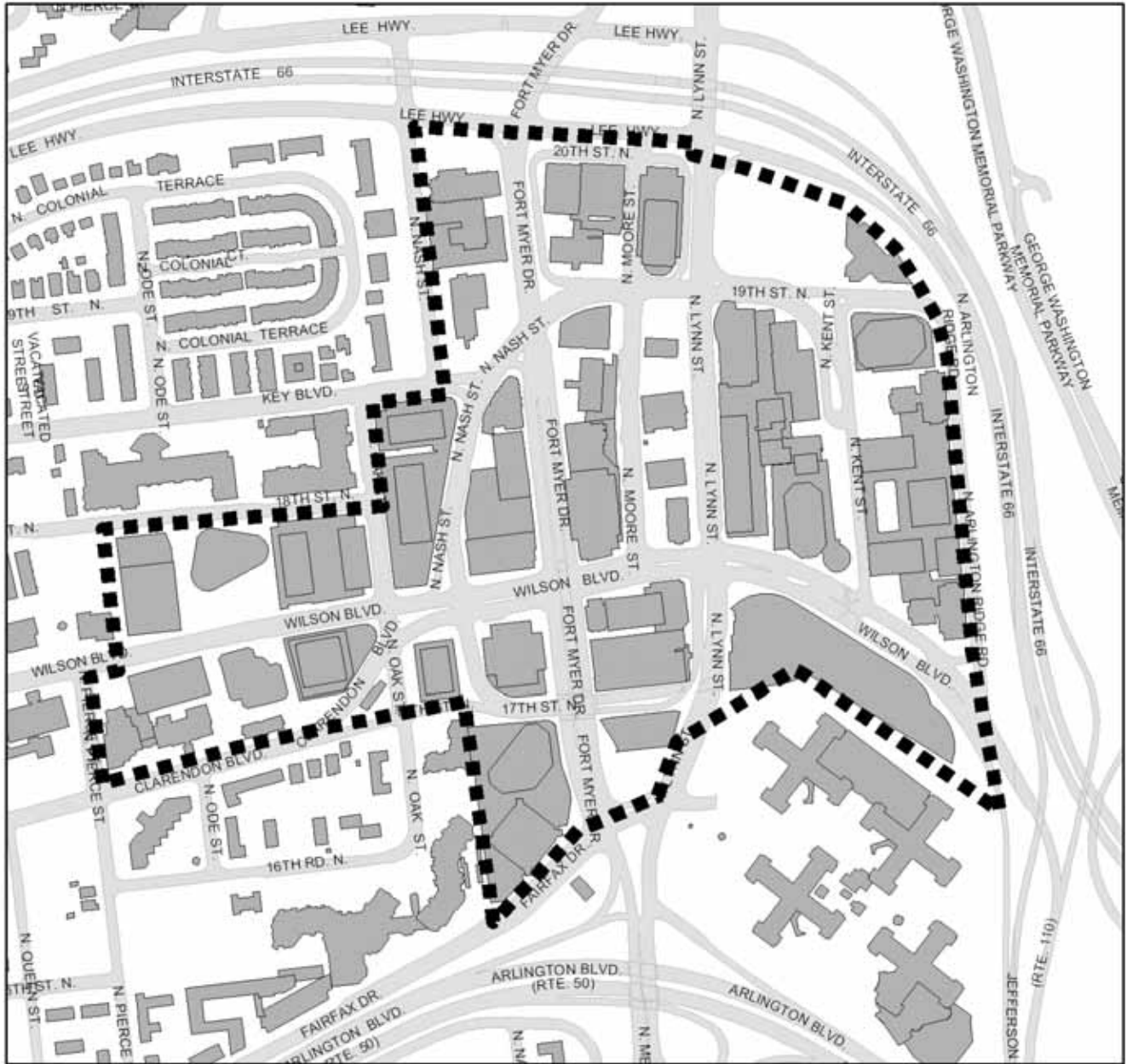
New buildings with the greatest building heights as permitted by site plan in the "C-O Rosslyn" Zoning District shall be generally located in the core of Rosslyn around the Metro station entrances; and

Buildings farther from the core and closer to the boundary of the "RCRD" and adjacent to residential buildings shall generally taper down in height and shall be designed to achieve transitions to the adjacent planned and zoned land use densities and building heights in a way that furthers sound land use planning and good urban design.

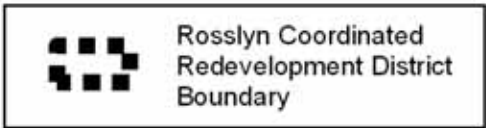
Consideration shall also be given to the impact on "view corridors".

Further refinement and General Land Use Plan amendments shall be considered within the framework of a comprehensive review of the Rosslyn Sector Plan.

ATTACHMENT 4



**Rosslyn Coordinated
Redevelopment District**



DEPT. OF COMMUNITY
PLANNING, HOUSING AND
DEVELOPMENT



Note: This map is for property location assistance only. They may not represent the latest survey, and other information.